

September 2, 2010

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 2, 2010 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Cunningham, Gobble, Griffiths,
McCabe, Watson, and Chairperson Reilly.

Absent: Commissioner Chim.

Also Present: Environmental and Planning Manager Lodan,
Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan,
Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones, and
Environmental Quality Officer Hill.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to grant Commissioner Chim an excused absence for the September 2, 2010 Commission meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairperson Reilly led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Gobble, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6A. MINUTES OF AUGUST 5, 2010

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved for the approval of the August 5, 2010 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Chim).

7. OIL MATTERS

The Commission was in recess from 7:02 to 7:25 p.m. to allow Commissioners the opportunity to review supplemental materials.

7A. POWER RUN OIL, INC., 4900 DEL AMO BOULEVARD – REVIEW OF RESULTS FOR NOISE AND VIBRATION TESTING AND REQUEST FOR TWENTY FOUR HOUR OPERATION

Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones provided background on the material of record and described results of noise and vibration testing conducted on August 5 and August 6, 2010. She noted that the owner has installed a vapor recovery system for fume mitigation and has taken additional security measures. She presented staff recommendation to allow the well to operate 24 hours for at least one year, with a condition of approval that the owner work with staff and resident at 20329 Donora Avenue to install landscape to camouflage the well enclosure. She stated that in 2011 the site is required to be reviewed by the Commission for a general operation extension as required every three years per Torrance Code for nonconforming well sites; at that time, the Commission can determine whether or not the 24-hour operation status will become permanent.

John Harris, Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, representing Power Run Oil, stated that the owner fully supports staff recommendation. He noted that statements from Justin Cook, Director of Engineering for BridgeNet International, Charles Champion, petroleum engineer, and Daniel Reyes, lease operator, were included in agenda materials. He pointed out that BridgeNet was selected to conduct testing by the City and not by Power Run Oil. He stated that Power Run Oil wants to be as good a neighbor as it possibly can and that its operation fully complies with all City and AQMD regulations.

At 7:34 p.m., Chairperson Reilly closed the public hearing but reopened it at 9:35 p.m. to hear testimony from Justin Cook, Director of Engineering for BridgeNet.

Mr. Cook, Newport Beach, described vibration testing conducted on August 5 and 6, 2010 in the rear yard of the residence at 20123 Donora Avenue. He stated that results indicated that the average vibration measurement of 9.1 VdB was the same whether the well was on or off, noting that the testing confirmed that the average vibration level is well below an average residential vibration level.

Responding to Commissioner Cunningham's inquiry, Mr. Cook advised that no testing was conducted during well start up.

Commissioner Watson received clarification from staff that the Commission would be able to review all operating issues concerning this site in one year.

Commissioner Gobble requested information regarding noise and vibration caused during loading of the trucks as well as residents' complaints about odor on August 16 and 17, 2010.

Daniel Reyes, lease operator, stated that a diesel truck runs approximately 45 minutes four times a month. He described modifications made to the vapor recovery system in May 2010 to address odor concerns resulting from Power Run's shipping of

oil. He stated that he inspected the site on August 16 and 17, 2010 and did not smell anything; additionally, Avanti Environmental, environmental consultants, inspected the entire tank farm with gas monitors on August 17, 2010 and did not detect any leaks with gas monitors. He added that the AQMD works with and accepts reports from Avanti Environmental.

Chairperson Reilly expressed an interest in seeing future reports from Avanti Environmental.

Commissioner Griffiths received clarification from staff that the only official complaint made to the City since May 2010 was regarding the detection of odor in August 2010.

At 7:44 p.m., Chairperson Reilly closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gobble stated that he is pleased that Power Run Oil has worked together with staff and neighbors since May 2010 and that he would welcome assurance that communication continues.

Commissioner Griffiths expressed surprise that the neighbors did not attend this meeting to voice their concerns and encouraged them to continue to assemble facts and supporting evidence over the next year.

Commissioner Watson voiced support for staff's recommendation.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to concur with staff recommendation; Commissioner Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 5-1 voice vote (Commissioner McCabe opposing, Commissioner Chim absent).

8. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

8A. STAN MYLES, AQMD – DISCUSSION OF LAWN MOWER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones introduced the item and welcomed Stan Myles, Senior Public Information Specialist, Legislative and Public Affairs, South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

Mr. Myles expressed his appreciation to the Commission for its interest in hosting a lawn mower exchange program in or near the City. He advised that the request is going through the process and distributed an e-mail dated August 31, 2010 from the Technology Advancement Office stating its requirement for a secured lot with easy access and large enough to conduct the event. He noted that, once a suitable site is determined, the request would move forward. He stated that the lawn mower exchange program is one of their most successful programs and that there would be 1,000-1,500 units available for exchange.

Commissioners suggested possible sites that include El Camino College, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Northrop Grumman, Torrance Airport, Home Depot Center, and high school parking lots.

Chairperson Reilly stated that she was a recipient of a new lawn mower last spring at the Long Beach exchange and commended the process and quality of the model she received. She mentioned that she was able to purchase an after-market adapter that attaches to her mower for edging or weed whacking. At her request, Mr. Myles explained the program to exchange gas mowers for battery-charged electric mowers to audience members.

In response to Commissioner Cunningham's inquiry, Mr. Myles described the leaf blower program for professional landscapers.

Commissioner McCabe suggested promoting the leaf blower program through the City's business license process.

Mr. Myles distributed invitations to the 22nd Annual Clean Air Awards on October 1, 2010 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

The Commission was in recess from 8:05 to 8:13 p.m.

9. SIGN MATTERS

Chairperson Reilly explained the policies and procedures of the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

9A. SNP10-00002: TORRANCE CAR WASH – 2476 SEPULVEDA BOULEVARD

Request: To remodel two existing 18' high x 5'1" internally illuminated double-face ground signs, to add 4' x 4' readerboard panels and electronic gas prices displays.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the request with the following modifications:

1. The signs can be remodeled to include the electronic gas price display only, leaving the upper panel as it is with the carwash name. The coloring for the electronic wording should be amber in color and the two existing freestanding price panels must be removed from the north and west property elevations. That unpermitted signage shall not be used including but not limited to A-frame signs, bow signs, flags, hand held signs, balloons, etc.

If a readerboard is allowed, staff recommends strongly that only one be allowed rather than two and that the following conditions be imposed for the sign:

1. The copy shall remain still for at least 3 to 4 seconds.
2. No running, blinking or flashing copy, graphics or video.
3. Maximum illumination shall be reduced at dusk.
4. Time and space shall be allowed for civic announcements and events.
5. Illumination shall be extinguished by 10:00 p.m. (except for gas prices)
6. Advertisements shall only be for businesses on site. Greetings, birthday wishes and similar acknowledges are prohibited from being displayed.

7. Obtain any necessary permits.

With the aid of slides, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones reviewed the request and discussed staff's analysis and recommendation. She stated that Torrance Car Wash is located on the southeast corner of Crenshaw and Sepulveda Boulevards and that the site has a gas station, carwash, food mart, and kiosk.

Reza Abolahrar, applicant, discussed his request for electronic gas price displays as the current displays are extremely small. He presented the request to add a readerboard to better promote his business, increase visibility, and inform customers about the savings they would receive. He stated that the kiosk blocks visibility, especially from Sepulveda Boulevard, but that it is too costly to remove. He expressed willingness to utilize amber-color wording, to remove all unpermitted signage, and to offer time and space for civic announcements. He noted that the readerboard would state Torrance Car Wash and display time, speed limit, temperature, and daily specials.

Commissioners received clarification from staff that the readerboards would be two-sided, that existing ground signs were approved in 2005, and that timing of copy and prohibition of sign twirlers could be a condition of approval.

Commissioner Watson stated that she finds the existing signage visually confusing and suggested that "cleaner" provides a clearer message.

Amy Wagner, West 228th Street, expressed concern that a readerboard at such a busy intersection would be a distraction to drivers.

At 8:48 p.m., Chairperson Reilly closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gobble noted that many residents do not want a proliferation of readerboards; however, businesses need to advertise and convey messages. He expressed support for an electronic gas price display and for the readerboard if there are conditions for a slower timing of copy and removal of unpermitted signage.

Commissioner Griffiths stated that the readerboard request does not fall under the City's readerboard guidelines. He expressed concern about unnecessary visual distraction but voiced support for an electronic gas price display for safety purposes.

Commissioner Watson stated that a consolidation would help clarify the corner and reduce some of the visual distractions. She stated that she could support the request as an appropriate use of readerboards because it is an existing footprint, adding that there should be stipulations regarding sign twirlers, unpermitted signage, and flashing copy.

Commissioner McCabe, with concurrence from Commissioner Cunningham, stated that he is sympathetic with the owner but that he does not see the request an exception to current readerboard guidelines. He stated that he cannot support approval of the readerboard but supports an electronic price display.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to approve the request for an electronic gas price display and two readerboard panels with stipulations that the readerboard copy shall remain static for 20 to 30 seconds, that all temporary signage be removed, and that

sign twirlers be prohibited. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. The motion failed to pass as reflected in a 2-4 voice vote (absent Commissioner Chim).

MOTION: Commissioner Griffiths moved to concur with staff recommendation; Commissioner Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed as reflected in a 5-1 voice vote (absent Commissioner Chim).

9B. SNP10-00003: WALTERIA PLAZA – 24255 HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD

Request: A) Tenant sign program consisting of pin mounted, blue metal individual letters, 18" high x 2/3rds width of the tenant frontage. Letters will be mounted to 3" x 3" illuminated raceways.

B) One 6'3" high x 5'11" double-faced electronic readerboard ground sign. Amber copy and graphics. The sign exterior shall be stucco and painted to match the building with address numerals on the base. Proposed location is the corner of 244th and Hawthorne Boulevard.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the tenant sign program with the following conditions:

1. All tenant signage must be *University Roman BD BT Blue* font.
2. All tenant signage must be one line of copy.
3. The raceways must match the color of the building.

Denial of the electronic readerboard ground sign. Staff could support a ground sign if it were designed to be more in keeping with the architectural style of the building and continued to incorporate the Hawthorne Corridor Specific Plan district colors but without electronic or manual readerboard copy. Staff also recommends that, if approved, the ground sign be redesigned to have a solid base and have similar architecture and color as the building.

If the Commission finds for the approval of an electronic readerboard ground sign, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. The copy shall remain still for at least 3 to 4 seconds.
2. No running, blinking or flashing copy, graphics or video.
3. Maximum illumination shall be reduced at dusk.
4. Time and space shall be allowed for civic announcements and events.
5. Illumination shall be extinguished by 10:00 p.m.
6. Advertisements shall only be for businesses on site. Greetings, birthday wishes and other acknowledgements are prohibited from being displayed on the readerboard.

With the aid of slides, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones reviewed the request and discussed staff's analysis and recommendation for the site located on the northwest corner of Hawthorne Boulevard and 244th Street. She noted that construction on the site has not begun, but the proposal is for a mixed-use development with office

and retail use as well as six townhome units. She stated that wall signs, awning signs, or projecting blade signs are more appropriate than a readerboard and recommended a monument sign with permanent panels that name the tenants.

Michael Pickett, Hawthorne Boulevard, owner, presented his request and stated that a readerboard is crucial for attracting and advertising long-term business tenants as well as the changeable interest rates that he offers. He stated that he has worked with staff to implement recommended changes. He expressed willingness to allow for civic announcements and to have the copy static for 20-30 seconds with amber lighting.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry, Environmental and Planning Manager Lodan explained the difference between an LED sign and a readerboard.

At 9:14 p.m., Chairperson Reilly closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gobble applauded Mr. Pickett for building something that is architecturally pleasing for the area. He stated that he could support the readerboard request if it is static for 20-30 seconds and because it is on Hawthorne Boulevard.

Commissioner Griffiths stated that the readerboard request falls outside the guidelines that were put in place.

MOTION: Commissioner Griffiths moved to concur with staff recommendation; Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 3-2 voice vote (with Commissioner Cunningham abstaining, Commissioner Chim absent).

9C. SNP10-00004: GREEN CLEAN XPRESS CAR WASH – 17500 PRAIRIE AVENUE

Request: To retain a 3'4" high x 6'10" double-face electronic readerboard panel on top of an existing pole sign, making the overall height 15'.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends denial of the electronic readerboard panel. If the Commission finds for its approval, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. The copy shall remain still for at least 3 to 4 seconds.
2. No running, blinking or flashing copy, graphics or video.
3. Maximum illumination shall be reduced at dusk.
4. Time and space shall be allowed for civic announcements and events.
5. Illumination shall be extinguished by 10:00 p.m.
6. Advertisements shall only be for businesses on site. Greetings, birthday wishes and other acknowledgements are prohibited from being displayed on the readerboard.
7. That the gaps on either side of the readerboard shall be filled.
8. That the existing building mounted static readerboard be removed.
9. That unpermitted signage shall not be used including a-frame signs, bow signs, flags, balloons, hand held signs, vehicles used as signs, etc.
10. That all necessary permits are obtained.

With the aid of slides, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Jones reviewed the request and discussed staff's analysis and recommendation for the site located on the east side of Prairie Avenue.

Ian Cunningham, applicant, presented his request and explained how subdivision of the property and street reconfiguration has hurt his business. He stated that the Car Wash lacks visibility and expressed hope that the request would bring back the access and visibility that is needed. He mentioned that the readerboard would only display his business name, hours of operation, changing prices, date, time, temperature, and civic announcements.

In response to Commissioner Watson's inquiry about his "green" business, he stated that 80% of the water used is recirculated and that they use low pressure nozzles and biodegradable soaps.

David Dely, Donora Avenue (no speaker card), partner, stated that the Car Wash provides good service and value.

At 9:41 p.m., Chairperson Reilly closed the public hearing.

Responding to Commissioner McCabe's inquiry, Environmental and Planning Manager Lodan noted that the site is limited but that a manual readerboard or cabinet sign could be an alternative to an electronic readerboard.

Chairperson Reilly received clarification from staff that there have been no complaints from residents regarding the illumination and that it would be possible to condition that it is only illuminated during business hours.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to approve the readerboard request with stipulations as stated in staff's recommendation except that illumination be allowed only during hours of operation and timing of copy to be at 30 second intervals; Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 4-2 roll call vote (Commissioners Griffiths and McCabe opposing, Commissioner Chim absent).

10. ORAL COMMUNICATION

10A. Amy Wagner, West 228th Street, distributed information about the annual Collie Parade and puppy match sponsored by the South Bay Collie Fanciers on August 28, 2010.

10B. Commissioner Gobble announced a Solar Education Workshop on September 7, 2010 on Maple Avenue and a Lamp Exchange at Kmart in October 2010. He distributed a Green Living brochure from City of Carson and information about insulated concrete forms.

10C. Commissioner Cunningham announced the grand opening of Landi Renzo on September 9, 2010.

10D. Commissioner Watson encouraged Commissioners to look for speakers for next year's Environmental Fair.

10E. Responding to Commissioner McCabe's inquiry, Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan advised the study on train noise has started but it does not appear to be feasible or affordable for the City to become a "quiet" zone.

10F. Chairperson Reilly discussed her attendance at the Southern California Green Conference and Symposium sponsored by the Gas Company on September 2, 2010. She particularly enjoyed speaker Sam Rashkin who discussed upgrading homes to retain profitability.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 10:07 p.m., Commissioner McCabe moved to adjourn the meeting to October 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Reilly so ordered.

Approved as Submitted October 7, 2010 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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